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Sen. Cassis is kickoff speaker at FIRST Robotics Competition

LANSING – State Sen. Nancy Cassis gave a welcoming address at the FIRST Robotics Great Lakes Regional Competition Saturday morning in Ypsilanti. Sen. Cassis, a strong supporter of the FIRST Robotics program the last 10 years, spoke to students, parents, corporate sponsors, mentors and coaches on the importance of the program and the skills it develops.

“Today’s competitors are the engineers and highly trained technicians needed today and tomorrow,” said Cassis, R-Novi. “FIRST Robotics teaches our young people focused brainstorming, real-world teamwork and the ability to develop timelines and work on deadline—all skills that will be helpful in preparation for higher education and entry into the work force.”

FIRST Robotics is a multinational competition in which teams of high school students, sponsored and assisted by local companies and volunteers, design, assemble, and test a robot capable of performing a specified task in competition with other teams. This year’s competition is titled Aim High. Two teams of players and robots try to score points by launching or pushing balls into their opponent’s goals.

Intier Automotive and Novi High School won the Imagery Award, and GM Milford Proving Ground and Huron Valley Schools were awarded Regional Winner #3. The schools will compete in the Championship Event of the competition in Atlanta from April 27 – April 29.

“Congratulations to all the students at these fine schools and their corporate sponsors,” Cassis said. “These students have demonstrated acute problem-solving and critical-thinking skills as well as the imagination to implement them.”

FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) was founded in 1989 by Dean Kamen, inventor of the Segway Human Transporter. One of the organization’s stated goals is to transform culture, making science, math, engineering and technology “as cool for kids as sports are today.”

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